things, contribute to Vitamin 'A' deficiency leading to night blindness. According to a random survey conducted by ICMR, in Rajasthan and Gujarat 13.6 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively the pre-school children suffer from night blindness due to Vitamin 'A' deficiency. The Voluntary Health Association has conducted a survey in Rajasthan only and that too has covered only one village. The corrective steps taken by the Government include, extensive Health education, additional supply of Vitamin 'A' and continuous monitoring of the drought situation both at the State and Central level. The programme of Prophylaxis against blindness due to Vitamin 'A' deficiency started in the IV Five Year Plan is being continued with progressively increasing coverage of children in the age group of 1—5 years.

Grievances of Porters

2915. SHRI RAMSINGBHAI PATALIYABHAI RATHVAKOLI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 'Delhi Railway Licence Porters Union' Delhi, has served a notice dated the 23rd February, 1988 regarding their grievances;

(b) if so, what are the details of their demands;

(c) what action has been taken in this regard;

(d) the outcome thereto;

(e) whether Government has discussed with the representatives of these porters/coolies; and

(f) if so, what are the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) A representation dated 23rd February, 1988 addressed to Shri Ram Naresh Khushwaha, MP has been forwarded by Hon'ble Home Minister to the Minister of State (Railways).

(b) The demands include:—

(i) Protection against atrocities by the GRP staff on licensed porters.

(ii) Licensed porters be given the status of a railway employee.

(iii) Porterage rates be increased.

(iv) Provision of rest shelters for licensed porters at stations.

(v) Discharged licensed porters be reinstated.

(vi) Facility of transfer of licence badge of porters to anyone.

(vii) Prevention of entry of unauthorised porters into railway stations/premises.

(c) and (d) The demands have been examined and the reply is under issue.

(e) No. Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

Delivery Rooms at Railway Stations

2916. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway stations which have delivery rooms, zonewise;

(b) the number of railway stations which are to be provided this facility during the next three years; and

(c) the total earnings of Railways through this head in delivery rooms from April 1986 to February 1988?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) There are no "delivery rooms" as such at railway stations.

However, the facility for delivery of goods is available at all stations/ sidings open for booking of goods.

(c) Total earnings from goods traffic in Indian Railways during April 1986 to January, 1988 were about Rs. 10,082 crores. The figures of February, 1988 are not yet available.

Posts Lying Vacant in the Ministry of Railways

2917. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of posts lying vacant in the various departments of the Ministry of Railways during the last three years;

(b) what are the reasons for the delay in filling up these posts; and

(c) by when these posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) The vacancy position in the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) changes from time to time. The number of posts lying vacant at the end of each of the last three years was as under:—

31.3.1985—153

31.3.1986—110

31.3.1987— 65

These vacancies were for short duration and the reason for delay in filling these posts was due to non-availability of candidates nominated by the various recruiting agencies such as Union Public Service Commission, Staff Selection Commission, etc. Filling up of posts is a continuous process and efforts are made to fill them up as quickly as possible. No vacancies are carried from year to year. The period for which said posts inevitably lie vacant is generally a few months.

Licences to Coolies/Porters

2918. SHRI RAMSINGBHAI PATALIYABHAI RATHVAKOLI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have issued licences to Railway Coolies/Porters on various stations of Delhi and various divisions of Railways throughout the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of the licences issued on each station during the last three years;

(c) what is the number of licenced porters/coolies existing at present on each station as on 28th February, 1988;

(d) what are the Rules, Regulations, Policy, Norms and Guidelines for the issue of such licences; and

(e) what protection and assistance are being given to such licenced porters/coolies and their Unions, Associations and Federation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (e) The information is being collected from the Zonal Railways and the same will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Demonstration by Coolies/Porters

2919. SHRI RAMSINGBHAI PATALIYABHAI RATHVAKOLI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway coolies/porters have demonstrated in Delhi on 9th March, 1988 with their demands;

(b) whether it is a fact that some officials of the Railway Board had met the representatives of the porters on 9th March, 1988 and discussed with them in the matter; and

(c) if so, what are the names and status of the deputationists and the other details thereof?